

Art in Public Places Downtown Miami Tour

Isamu Noguchi

Slide Mantra, 1986

Carrara marble

Bayfront Park, Downtown Miami

Slide Mantra is a massive 29-ton sculpture carved from Carrara marble by the late Japanese-American artist Isamu Noguchi. This lyrical and playful work, sited in Miami's Bayfront Park, is more than ten-feet tall and functions as a slide with steps up the back and a spiral descent. Stated Noguchi, "The sculpture is called 'Slide Mantra' meaning resonance. Up steps through a hole we slide down in a double helix."

Noguchi designed Bayfront Park in 1986 and created *Slide Mantra* the same year to represent the United States at its art pavilion in the Venice Biennale. In this piece, appropriately sited in a city park, Noguchi wished to show his "long held belief that play could lead to a new appreciation of sculpture." *Slide Mantra* was purchased in 1990 from the Noguchi Foundation, located in Long Island, New York.

Ralph Helmick and Stuart Schechter

Double Vision, 2000

Pewter, wire

American Airlines Arena, Miami

Boston-based artists Ralph Helmick and Stuart Schechter have completed *Double Vision*, a monumental two-part suspended sculpture for the American Airlines Arena. Installed in the main entrance atrium space of the Arquitectonica-designed structure, *Double Vision* addresses the impulse toward flight with four thousand cast pewter birds, jets, and flying machines. These precisely suspended shapes coalesce into large composite forms – a bird and an airplane float overhead in what the artists refer to as a kind of three-dimensional pointillism. One of the main figures, an eagle, is composed of over 2000 small aircraft and is suspended at the north bay of the Arena's west entrance. A DC-3, made of more than 2000 small bird sculptures, hangs in the south bay.

Ralph Helmick, a Boston-based sculptor and Stuart Schechter, an MIT-trained engineer and sculptor worked together on this technically challenging art installation. Helmick brings 17 years of experience working in public art. Schechter, in addition to being an exceptional sculptor, had a ten-year career as a rocket scientist. Together, they are able to implement complex public art projects. Stated Schechter, “we find that working collaboratively helps free up our approach, supplying a kind of conceptual oxygen, blurring the lines between art and science.”

Issues relating to the melding of art and technology are central to their collaborative work. Stated Helmick, “Like most artists in earlier times we embrace available technology, so our use of computer-based tools in various stages of creation should come as no surprise. But our central interest involves making a handmade piece for this unique environment.”

Lannan Collection, Miami-Dade Community College (time permitting)

Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen

***Dropped Bowl with Scattered Slices and Peels*, 1990**

Concrete, aluminum, cast resin, computerized fountain

Government Center at Open Space Park

This monumental outdoor sculpture with multi-dimensional sections, represents an imaginary moment in time when a huge bowl of orange slices and peels drops to the ground and shatters. The artwork includes eight bowl fragments in cast concrete with an overall weight of 124,000 lbs., four peels in steel plate with painted surfaces, and five orange sections executed in reinforced cast resin. Oldenburg is best known for his gigantic food constructions and his daily object soft sculptures.

Edward Ruscha

***Words Without Thoughts Never To Heaven Go*, 1985-89**

Acrylic on canvas

Main Library, Downtown Miami

California artist Edward Ruscha is best known for his exploration of the meaning and power of words. In this, his first public art commission, Ruscha

took a quote from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, floated each word separately on a sky-like ground, and installed the 360° mural in a continuous frieze in the first floor rotunda.

In a second phase of the commission, Ruscha designed sixty related lunettes (moon-shaped paintings) for placement throughout the library's two floors. The backgrounds of the lunettes are painted black, white, and gray, creating a unifying theme reflecting the spirit of black ink printed on white paper. These works contain provocative and whimsical bits of language, serving to stimulate thoughts on the nature of language.

Carol Brown

***Seven More of Them*, 1986**

Aluminum

Government Center, Downtown Miami

A native of Memphis and a Miami resident, Carol Brown creates sculptural groupings of mysterious personages. Her pieces are both recognizably human and strangely other-worldly. They are of varying sizes; all are vertical figures, anchored to the ground, and clearly not going anywhere. Yet, they seem to possess a kinetic power. "I expect a mixture of reactions. One person sees my work as whimsical, while another finds it creepy. That fascinates me and it is something I am consciously working with."

Raymond Duchamp-Villon (1876-1918)

***Cheval Majeur*, 1914**

Bronze, painted

Cultural Plaza

An important French sculptor and brother of artist Marcel Duchamp, Duchamp-Villon was recognized as pre-eminent among the small number of Cubist sculptors working in Paris by 1914. *Cheval Majeur* is his most celebrated work and in it he completed his move towards abstraction. It has been referred to as "the most powerful piece of sculpture produced by any strictly Cubist artist." In it Duchamp-Villon was able to represent the dynamics of movement. Twelve casts of this sculpture were made and are found in some of the most important museums in the world including the Tate in London, MOMA in New York City. Duchamp-Villon served with the French

army in the First World War and died from blood poisoning after contracting typhoid fever.

Joan Lehman

***Rhythm of the Train*, 1988**

Stainless steel

Executed in brushed stainless steel, this monumental sculpture by Miami-based artist Joan Lehman spans 29 feet and rises 17 feet at its highest point. The eight arched elements create an undulating rhythm alluding to the speed, movement, and rhythm of rail travel. Sited adjacent to Metrorail tracks, the sculpture has become a landmark for Miami's Cultural Plaza which houses The Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami Art Museum, and the Main Library.